ARIMSE ARCHITECTS, LLC

2405 RIDGE PL SE BZA - BURDEN OF PROOF

2405 RIDGE PL SE, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20020

BZA PERMIT: XX-XXXXXX

[DOB PERMIT: B2605311]

OCTOBER 20, 2026

DCRA Permit Application Center

1100 4th St SW, Washington, DC 20024

2nd Floor

Re: **2405 RIDGLE PL SE BZA**
2405 RIDGLE PL SE, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20020
DOB PERMIT # B2605311

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION AND AREA VARIANCE RELIEF

I. PROPERTY AND PROPOSED ADDITION

The property is located at 2405 Ridge Place, S.E., Washington, D.C., Square 5624, Lot 0110, and is located in the RA-1 Zone. The property is improved with an existing three-story multifamily residential building having a building area footprint of approximately 675 square feet.

The Applicant proposes a modest rear addition to the existing residential building. The proposed addition would add 262 square feet of building footprint, resulting in a total building area footprint of 962 square feet. The addition will expand the living/dining structures over three floors to accommodate residential living space, including bedrooms, while maintaining the existing three-story height and general configuration of the building. Please note that the proposed addition does not increase the existing building height

The property is unusual in its physical relationship to the surrounding public space. Ridge Place borders the property to the north, and public alley space borders substantial portions of the property to the west and south.
The Applicant has actively pursued the closure and acquisition of approximately 1,050 square feet of adjoining public alley space (Petition SR26-SO-01418), initiating the process on January 20, 2026. The Applicant has demonstrated a significant commitment to this process, paying a

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$2,750 filing fee, investing $4,000 for professional land surveying services, and incurring $2,120 in fees to satisfy DC Water easement requirements, totaling $8,870 in expenditures to date. Additionally, the Applicant has secured the consent of the abutting property owner and successfully resolved initial objections from DC Water. However, DDOT's concerns regarding potential future public alley use remain pending, and the petition is subject to a lengthy legislative review process by the District Council. While the hopeful future purchase of the alley land will resolve the footprint issue and substantially reduce the requested FAR relief (though not completely eliminate the need for it), the owner has decided to proceed with this submission now rather than waiting for lengthy final approvals and deed incorporation. Crucially, the Applicant is not requesting an increase in the total number of units on the property. Instead, this addition is dedicated entirely to increasing the number of bedrooms within the existing units to transform them into true, family-sized apartments.
The Applicant requests:

A. Special exception relief from the lot-occupancy requirements of Subtitle F § 210.1;
B. An area variance from the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) requirements of Subtitle F § 201.1; and
C. Special exception relief from the side-yard requirements of Subtitle F § 208.5. [2]
D. For the reasons set forth below, the requested relief satisfies the applicable standards.

II. SPECIAL EXCEPTION FROM LOT OCCUPANCY & BUILDING AREA — SUBTITLE F § 210.1

Subtitle F § 210.1 generally limits the maximum building area to 700 square feet and limits lot occupancy in the RA-1 Zone to forty percent (40%). Pursuant to Subtitle F § 5201 and Subtitle X § 901.2, the Board may grant special exception relief for an addition where the proposed development will remain in harmony with the purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and will not unduly adversely affect neighboring property. [1, 2]

A. The proposed building area and lot occupancy result primarily from the property's constrained existing dimensions.
    1. The existing building occupies approximately 675 square feet of the lot, establishing a baseline lot occupancy of 38% before construction of any addition.
    2. Accordingly, the existing building already consumes nearly the entire matter-of-right lot-occupancy allowance. Even a relatively modest addition causes the percentage calculation to increase substantially because of the tight spatial footprint of the existing lot.
    3. The proposed addition adds a footprint of 262 square feet, resulting in a final building area of 962 square feet and a total lot occupancy of 54% (a 14% deviation from the maximum standard). The physical scope of the expansion is modest; the apparent percentage increase is principally a structural consequence of accommodating family-sized, multi-bedroom spaces on a narrow parcel.
B. Light and air available to neighboring properties will not be unduly compromised.
    1. The addition is proposed at the rear of the existing building, rather than as an enlargement toward Ridge Place. Significant portions of the property are bordered by public alley space, providing physical separation and open space around the site.
    2. The proposed addition does not increase the existing three-story building height. Consequently, the requested lot-occupancy relief does not create the type of substantially larger or taller building mass that would ordinarily cause a significant loss of light and air to surrounding property.
C. Neighboring privacy will not be unduly compromised.

1. The relief concerns the placement and footprint of an addition to an existing residential building rather than the establishment of a new or more intensive use. Because the addition is located primarily toward the rear and substantial portions of the site adjoin public alley space, the configuration limits the degree to which the addition directly faces private adjoining property.

D. The addition will not substantially visually intrude upon the character and scale of Ridge Place.
    1. The existing building is already three stories, and the proposed addition continues that established building form rather than creating a new building different in height or scale. Most importantly, the addition is located behind the principal portion of the existing building. The existing building therefore remains the dominant element when the property is viewed from Ridge Place.

III. AREA VARIANCE FROM FAR — SUBTITLE F § 201.1

The RA-1 Zone generally permits a maximum FAR of 0.90. The existing structure operates at a baseline non-residential FAR equivalent of 0.69. To successfully achieve the physical expansion of the internal bedroom layouts without expanding the unit count, the proposed construction results in a final FAR profile of 1.80 (a deviation of 0.90). [1]

A. Extraordinary or exceptional conditions affect this specific property.
    1. The property is affected by a combination of exceptional physical circumstances:
        a) The original lot contains constrained square footage below standard RA-1 lot parameters.
        b) The property is unusually narrow, having approximately 25 feet of frontage.
        c) The existing three-story building was constructed within this constrained lot configuration.
        d) The property has an unusual relationship with surrounding public space, with Ridge Place at the front and public alley space bordering substantial portions of the property to the west and south.
    2. The Applicant's ongoing petition to acquire approximately 1,050 square feet of adjacent alley space demonstrates a proactive commitment to resolving development limitations. Although $8,870 has been spent resolving DC Water easement requirements, securing land surveys, and obtaining neighboring consent, agency review remains pending with DDOT regarding potential future public alley use. Because District Council approval and final legislative enactment may take extended time, the resulting parcel incorporation remains a future possibility rather than a present certainty, requiring this BZA application to be evaluated solely on the existing property boundaries.
    3. These circumstances, considered collectively, constitute an extraordinary or exceptional condition particular to this property rather than a condition generally applicable to ordinary RA-1 lots.

B. Strict compliance with the 0.90 FAR creates peculiar and exceptional practical difficulty.
    1. The practical difficulty in strictly complying with the 0.90 FAR cap is that it effectively penalizes the property's unique lot configuration and prevents the adaptive reuse of an existing structure to meet changing community needs. Forcing strict adherence to a 0.90 FAR means the building is permanently locked into a layout that cannot serve modern households. [1]

2. To expand the existing apartments into multi-bedroom units without an FAR variance, the Applicant would have to reduce the overall unit count or significantly alter the building's historical footprint—options that are structurally impractical and economically unfeasible. The strict application of the FAR limits creates a direct barrier to modernizing the interior living volume to provide adequate square footage for larger families.

IV. SPECIAL EXCEPTION FROM SIDE-YARD REQUIREMENTS — SUBTITLE F § 208.5

Subtitle F § 208.5 requires a minimum side yard of 5 feet on the left (5 L) and 5 feet on the right (5 R) in the RA-1 Zone. The existing building was structurally established with historical side yards of 0.5 feet on the left and 2 feet on the right. Because the proposed construction must structurally extend straight back along the existing planes of the building, the proposed addition maintains the current 0.5 L and 2 R configuration (representing a technical deviation of 7.5 L and 6 R from standard baseline parameters).

A. The requested side-yard relief is a direct consequence of the property's narrow configuration and existing construction.
    1. The existing lot is exceptionally narrow, with a total width of only approximately 25 feet. The existing structure already sits within the matter-of-right 5-foot side-yard buffer along its side property lines. Any rear addition that aligns with the existing structural walls must necessarily continue into the side-yard setback. Continuing the existing lateral lines of the structure represents the only logical architectural and structural approach to avoid an unlivable "telescoping" floor plan.
B. The unique public alley orientation ensures that light, air, and privacy are preserved.
    1. The property enjoys an unusual physical relationship with surrounding public space that mitigates any spatial impact of the side-yard deviation. Public alley space borders substantial portions of the property to both the west and south, providing an immediate, permanent physical buffer between the proposed rear addition and any privately owned adjoining parcels. Because of this built-in separation, the continuation of the existing side-yard footprint will not trap heat, block light, or restrict the flow of air to neighboring buildings.

V. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ALIGNMENT & LOCAL HOUSING NEED

The variances and special exceptions requested directly advance the Housing Element of the DC Comprehensive Plan, which explicitly prioritizes the expansion of housing diversity, the production of multi-bedroom configurations for larger households, and the prevention of displacement of multi-generational families from Southeast DC.

To substantiate the critical public benefit of this addition, an audit of the localized rental housing inventory surrounding 2405 Ridge Place SE was conducted:

A. 0.5-Mile Radius: A review of active multifamily market listings reveals 0 available three-bedroom (3BR) apartment units. Families who wish to remain within their immediate neighborhood have zero multi-family rental options.
B. 1-Mile Radius: Three-bedroom apartments account for a negligible 3.1% of the total rental stock. The few 3BR spaces that occasionally surface are standalone single-family

house rentals commanding severe premiums ($3,200–$3,900+/month), rather than accessible multifamily apartment options.

By granting the requested zoning deviations, the Board enables a project that creates high-quality, family-sized 3-bedroom apartments within an existing building footprint. It achieves a critical District housing goal without adding unit density, increasing the height of the building, or creating any adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

[1] https://dcoz.dc.gov
[2] https://online.encodeplus.com

Please let me know if you need further clarifications/information.

Sincerely, Ricardo Hendi Architect, AIA

Signed:

